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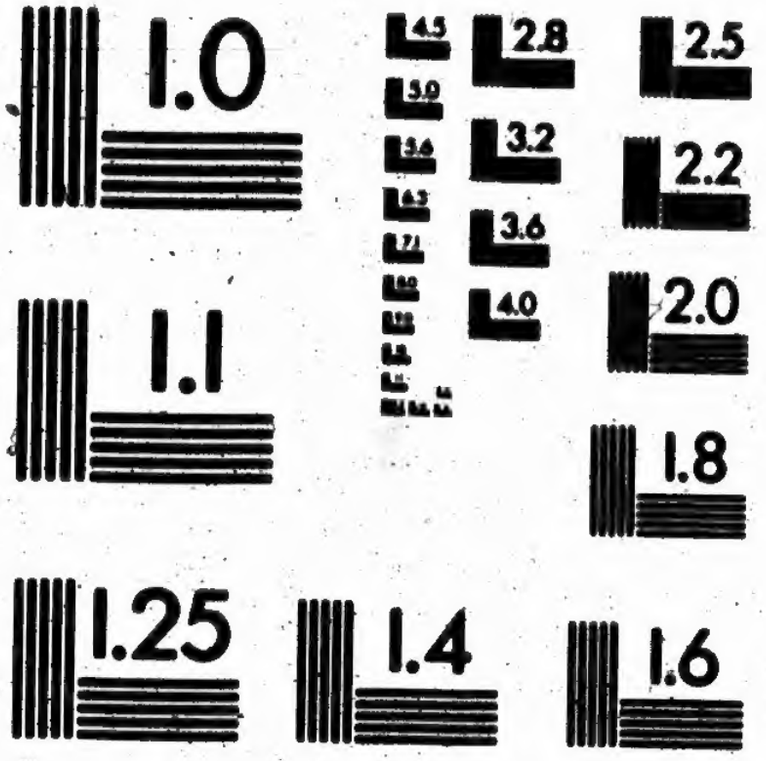

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THE

QUIGRICH;

OR,

CROZIER OF SAINT FILLAN.

BY

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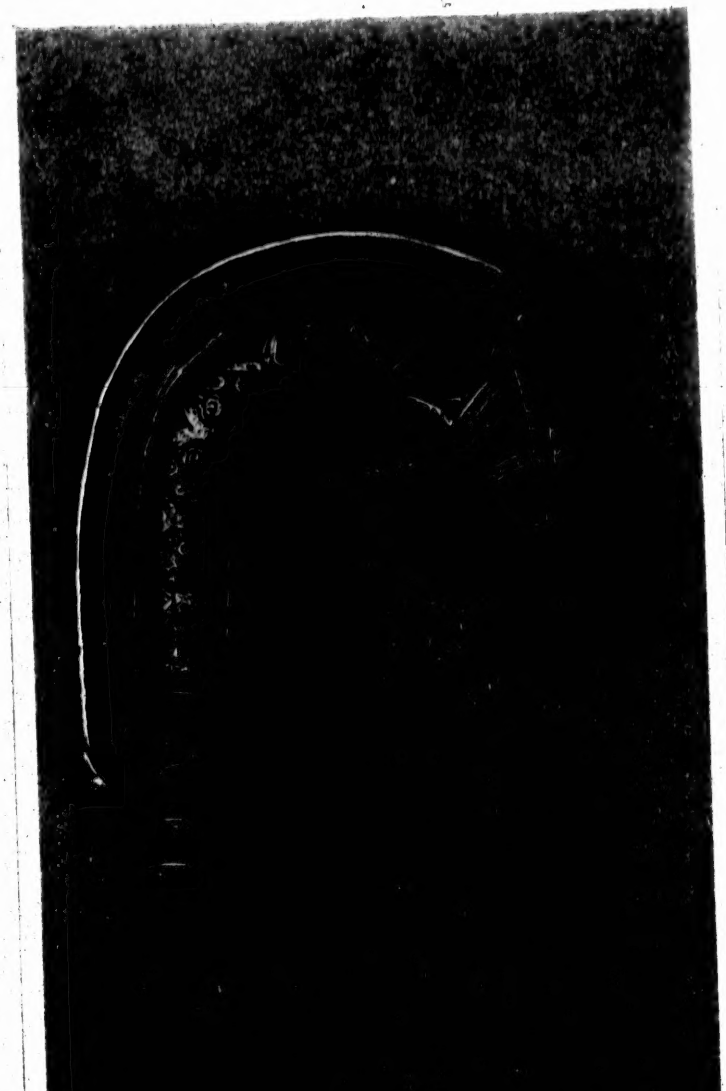

THE

QUIGRICH.

From the Canadian Journal, No. XXIV.

In the year 1782, Mr. William Thompson, of Christ's Church College, Oxford, during a long vacation ramble in the highlands of Perthshire, was shown, at the village of Killin, on the banks of Loch Tay, the *Quigrich*, or crosier believed to have anciently belonged to St. Fillan, who has bequeathed his name to the neighbouring Strathfillan, at the head of Glendochart, as well as to other points of local interest in that district of Perthshire. The Earl of Buchan was then organising the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, which obtained a Royal Charter in the following year, and to him, accordingly Mr. Thompson communicated a notice of the curious relic, accompanied with a drawing, the rudeness of which he entreats the Society to excuse, it being only the hasty sketch of a traveller, meant to lead the Society to the possession of the original.* But in this intention the intelligent tourist indulged in hopes which were not destined to realization; and when the communication was at length

* Transactions of Soc. Antiq. Scot. vol. iii, p. 289.

printed in the Society's Transactions, it was accompanied with a note which told that "The owner of the relic afterwards emigrated to America, carrying the Quigrich with him." When engaged, some years since, in preparing "The Prehistoric Annals of Scotland" for the press,—little dreaming then of becoming a settler in Canadian clearings, but rather disposed to imagine myself in some special respects *adscriptus glebæ*,—I tried to recover the traces of this ancient Scottish relic, and learned that it still existed in the safe custody of its hereditary keeper, who was settled on a farm in Western Canada. Since then, unanticipated changes have afforded me opportunities for a careful inspection of this curious Scottish ecclesiastical memorial, now transferred to Canadian soil, and such notes, descriptive or historical, as I have been able to glean concerning it, may very appropriately find a place in the *Canadian Journal*, relative to a relic, which, though now Canadian, claims an antiquity some centuries older than the first discovery of the New World, with all that pertains to its chronicled history.

Notwithstanding the long proscription of all ante-reformation and episcopal relics in Scotland, it is surprising how many such have been devoutly preserved, and venerated with superstitious fervour, almost to our own day. In the first Scottish Covenant, the subscription of which was, so early as 1585, rendered obligatory on every graduate of the Scottish universities, the subscriber is made do declare, after long and due examination of his own conscience, that he "abhors and detests all kinds of papistrie, but, in special, the vsurpit authoritie of that Romane Antechrist, . . . his canonizatioun of men, worschipping of imagrie, relicques and crosses; . . . his prophane holie water, baptising of belles, conjuring of spirits, crossing, saynyng, anoynting, conjuring, hallowing of Goddis holie creatouris, with the superstitious opinioun joyned thairwith." Nevertheless, at Killin,—according to a former incumbent, *cell-linn*: the cell of the Saint's pool,—and throughout Glendochart and Strathfillan, at the close of the eighteenth, and even in the earlier years of this nineteenth century, faith in the virtues of the relics of Saint Fillan seems to have been scarcely less strong than, of old, in the sanctity which the Gaels of Strathfillan ascribed to their good Abbot in the seventh century.

Alexander Dewar, the present custodier of the Quigrich, writes in answer to queries submitted to him: "I do not remember where

St. Fillan lived, having come to this country [Canada,] in the year 1818, but he had been through Perthshire, and there are several places there named after him, such as Dun-fhaolin: the hill of St. Fillan, at the east end of Loch Earn, where women with sickly children used to attend on the morning of the first of August, and bathe them in a spring that rose at the foot of the hill, believing that there was some virtue in the water; and there they left some of the clothes they had had on the child. On the top of the hill there is the form of a large arm-chair cut out of the rock, where St. Fillan sat and preached to the people. There is likewise, in Strathfillan, still standing, or at least was when I left Scotland, the walls of an old chapel, where people used to go with those who were out of their minds, and after dipping them two or three times in a deep pool of water that is in Uisge-fhaolin, they would leave them tied for the night in the old chapel, and such as got loose through the night they believed would get better, but those that remained bound were concluded incurable."

In this the Canadian custodier of St. Fillan's Crosier refers to a class of cures associated with the miraculous powers of another relic of the Saint, of which he appears not to have heard, though its associations are little less curious than those of the Saint's pastoral crook. Among the relics of the ancient Scottish and Welsh, as well as the Irish Churches, none appear to have been regarded with more devout or superstitious reverence than the portable handbells which are frequently associated with the name of some venerated and canonised ecclesiastic of the district to which they belong. Among the most prised relics of this class in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy is the *Clog beanuighte*, which was believed to manifest its sympathy by a heavy sweating on the approaching demise of its custodiers; and Mr. John Bell, of Dungannon, thus describes, in a letter to me, a scene which he himself witnessed. "It was an ancient custom to place the bell near any of the Hennings [its hereditary custodiers,] when dangerously ill. I visited Mrs. Henning, the widow of Paul Henning, the last keeper of the *Clog beanuighte*, on her death-bed. She lay in a large, badly-lighted apartment, crowded with people. The bell, which had remained several days near her head, seemed to be regarded by those who were present with much interest. The vapour of the heated chamber was so condensed on the cold metal of the bell, that occasionally small streams

trickled down its sides. This 'heavy sweating' as it was termed, was regarded by every one with peculiar horror, and deemed a certain prognostication of the death of the sick woman, who departed this life a few hours after I left the room. The agonised bell, I was told, had on many previous occasions given similar tokens as proofs of its sympathy, on the approaching demise of its guardians." What gives a special value to this Irish hand-bell is the inscription on it, by which its era is believed to be fixed to the eleventh century, though Dr. Petrie assigns it to so early a date as the close of the ninth century. The inscription upon it is: *Oroit ar Chumascach m̄ ailello: i. e.*, A prayer for Chumascach Mac Ailello; who is believed to be Cumascach, Archbishop of Armagh, A. D., 1065.

The Scottish bell of St. Kentigern, the apostle of Strathclyde, after forming an object of devout veneration to the citizens of Glasgow for centuries, has its memorial still preserved in the city arms; and relics or records of at least a dozen such ancient holy bells of Scotland are still extant. The majority of them are rude square iron bells, coated with copper or bronze, and bearing a close resemblance to the cattle-bells which tinkle in the woods around our Canadian clearings, with no very musical or harmonious clank, unless when softened by distance and the intervening forest, or rendered grateful to the ear of the wanderer in "the bush," by the promise they give of some farm-house or settled clearing at hand. Nevertheless, to one of those: the bell of St. Ternan, the apostle of the Picts, was given the name of *Ronecht*, derived seemingly from the Gaelic *ronnaich*, a poet; *rannach*, a songster: however unmusical its *clogarnach* or jangling would sound in modern ears. The Ronnell bell of Birnie, still preserved at the Parish Church of Birnie, in the old Bishopric of Moray, and said to have been brought from Rome by the first bishop, is of the same rude character already described. It is a single sheet of hammered iron formed into a square bell, with the metal overlapped and rivetted at the joinings, after which it has been coated with brass. Yet this unmusical relic of the ancient bishops of the northern diocese, probably derives its name from the like fond ascription of dulcet sounds to its rude clangour.

Of this same class was the ancient relic of St. Fillan, which at a comparatively recent period bore a prominent part in the exorcisms already referred to by the present custodier of the Quigrich, by which the votaries of the Saint were wont to effect cures of madness and

the casting out of devils. The Rev. Patrick Stuart, parish minister of Killin, writing to Sir John Sinclair, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, observes: "There is a bell belonging to the chapel of St. Fillan, that was in high reputation among the votaries of that Saint in old times. It usually lay on a gravestone in the churchyard. When mad people were brought to be dipped in the Saint's pool, it was necessary to perform certain ceremonies, in which there was a mixture of Druidism and Popery. After remaining all night in the chapel bound with ropes, the bell was set upon their head with great solemnity. It was the popular opinion that if stolen it would extricate itself out of the thief's hands, and return home ringing all the way."* The virtues, however, of the ancient relic seem to have vanished along with the faith of simpler ages. In the beginning of our sceptical nineteenth century, an English antiquary carried off the ancient bell, without the Saint's interposition on behalf of his long-favoured strath, and its potent *clogarnach* has never since announced its return to St. Fillan's cell. The *Buidheas* or bell of Strowan, another and no less potent relic of the same old Scottish Abbot, has adhered with more fidelity to the scene of its ancient miraculous powers. Mr. McInroy of Ludd its present custodier, informs me that it is still a favourite popular legend in Strowan and Blair Athol, that the native of a neighbouring parish having stolen the *Buidheas* and fled with it, he sat down to rest on a large boulder, on the top of a neighbouring hill, laying the bell on the stone beside him, while he drew breath. On attempting to resume his journey, however, he found the bell immoveable; but no sooner did the affrighted and penitent thief turn his face towards Strowan, with the resolution of returning the abstracted relic, than it became once more portable, and was forthwith restored to its favourite resting place.

Such are some of the curious evidences of the sanctity with which the relics of St. Fillan were recently regarded in the district where early in the seventh century he bore his part in the introduction of Christianity into Scotland; and won the reputation for ascetic virtue long after celebrated thus under date of his martyrdom, in a calendar of Scottish saints, written in the early part of the sixteenth century, and now preserved in the library of the university of Edinburgh: v. *Idus Januarii*.—In Scocia Sancti Felani abbatis apud Strathfillane

* Sinclair's Statistical Account, xvii. p. 376.

qui a puericie primordiis tanta discipline regiditate carnem afflixit ut posterum sensualitatis et viciorum refrenendi motus preberet exemplum. Such also are some of the many traces of the uneradicated veneration for saints, holy bells and other sacred relics, in Presbyterian Scotland, upwards of two centuries after their solemn denunciation in the first National Covenant.

But other associations than such curious psychological phenomena, pertain to the Quigrich of St. Fillan, now transferred with its hereditary custodiers to Canada; though it too had its healing virtues and potent charms, long known and reverenced in the privileged districts of the Saint. It has its historical associations also, and these of a nature so singularly interesting for Scotland, that it seems to lose much of its value by being transferred to Canadian soil; and thus divorced from all those national and local feelings which confer on it so peculiar a charm. When endeavouring to recover traces of this Scottish relic, in 1850, I was favoured with a letter from the Rev. Æneas McDonell Dawson, whose own immediate ancestors were for a time the guardians of St. Fillan's Crozier, in which he remarked: "The celebrated Crook of St. Fillan is still in Canada, and in the keeping of the very family to whose ancestor it was confided on the field of Bannockburn, when the King, displeased with the abbot for having abstracted from it the relics of St. Fillan previously to the battle, from want of confidence, it is alleged, in the Scottish cause, deprived him of the guardianship."*

In this form of family tradition is preserved the recollection of an incident of the field of Bannockburn, thus referred to in Borland's 'Acta Sanctorum."† "During the night when Robert, anxiously bent on his affairs, enjoyed not a moment's rest, and revolving all things in his mind, was at length engaged with some of his friends in earnest devotion and prayer to God and St. Fillan (whose arm inclosed in silver he believed was with him in the army,) that they might be propitious to his victory, suddenly the silver arm, in which the real one was inclosed, appeared open, and in the twinkling of an eye was shut without any person touching or approaching it. This miracle being observed, the priest approached the altar to inspect it, when he saw the real arm within in, and exclaiming that the Divinity was certainly present, he confessed to the King that when he had

* *Vide* Prehistoric Annals, p. 668.

† Borland's Acta Sanctorum. Venice, 1734. De S. Fillano sive Phillano.

formerly asked for the arm of St. Fillan he had given him the empty silver case, after taking out the relic, fearing it might be lost in the tumult. The King therefore, full of hope, spent the remainder of the night in thanksgiving and prayer." Hector Boece refers to this portent intervention on behalf of the Bruce. Camerarius also ascribes the victory to the same miraculous aid, speaking of it as "obtained by the intervention of divine assistance, Anno Chr. 1314, to St. Fillan's intercession for his countrymen;" but St. Fillan's legend disappears from the narrative of Major and other later historians.

Other evidence, however, tends to confirm the faith maintained in the Scottish legend of the fourteenth century which ascribed the victory of Bannockburn and the national independence, to the arm of St. Fillan which wrought so marvellously for his people on that glorious day. Were it not, indeed, that the sainted Abbot—no longer heedful of Scotland in this faithless century of ours,—has allowed his favoured reliquary, as well as its humble chronicler, to be transported beyond reach of Scottish legend, tale, or chronicle: much curious illustration might be added to this memento of a memorable national event. But unfortunately the libraries of Canada are far from rich in such materials. Barbour has given due prominence to the picturesque narrative of Maurice, Abbot of Inchaffray, celebrating mass in sight of the Scottish army; and then, passing barefooted along the front of the kneeling host with his uplifted crucifix, exhorting them to win their liberty or die. It connects this historical incident of the field of Bannockburn with the marvelous interposition ascribed to the arm of the sainted Abbot of an older century, when we recall the fact that centuries thereafter, and until the dissolution of religious houses at the Reformation, there was a cell or priory, belonging to the Abbey of Inchaffray, in Strathern, near the miraculous pool of St. Fillan, "founded by King Robert the Bruce, and consecrated to St. Fillan, in consideration of the assistance he had from that saint at the battle of Bannockburn."*

Some curious and highly interesting notices of ancient Scottish Crosiers and their hereditary custodiers, with charters of tenure of freeholds held in virtue of such trust, have been recovered by the researches of Mr. Cosmo Innes, Professor of History and Antiquities in Edinburgh University, and Mr. Joseph Robertson, another able

* Spottiswood's App. Hope's Minor Practicks, p. 484.

Scottish antiquary.* Episcopal memorials of the same class, recovered from more than one ancient tomb in the choirs of Scottish cathedrals, are figured or described in the "Prehistoric Annals of Scotland," along with other ecclesiastical relics connected with the early Scottish church.† One of those ancient Scottish Croziers, the relic of a favourite Celtic saint, and a memorial of the older cathedral of the See of Argyll: the Crozier of St. Moluac,—long held, along with a little freehold, in the Island of Lismore, the seat of the old Bishopric,—has been recently transferred to the Duke of Argyll, by the last "Baron of Bachul," as the hereditary keeper of the Crozier was called, from its Gaelic name of *Bachul Mohr*, or the Great Staff. In describing this relic, Mr. Innes adds: "The Baron Bachul's of Lismore, though an uncommon, is not a unique instance of such tenures in Scotland. There is charter evidence of a mere croft of land in Cowal being held in the fifteenth century as an appendage to the office of Keeper of the Crozier of St. Mund, the saint to whom Kilmun is dedicated. In this case the land or the tenure bears the name of Deowray—a name suggesting a similar office with that which gave the name *Deor* or *Jore* (modernised *Dewar*) to the hereditary Keeper of the Crozier of St. Phillan in Glendochart." To this also may be added, in illustration both of such tenure and name, the Holy Bell of St. Bowen, which still secures to the family of Dewar certain hereditary chartered rights in Monivaird.‡

If any such freehold pertained in ancient times to the *Doires* or *Dewars* of Strathfillan, in virtue of their trust, all traces of it have long disappeared. The English tourist to whom we owe the revived knowledge of the Crozier of St. Fillan,—which appears to have been altogether unknown to the authors of the Statistical Accounts of the Parish of Killin,—describes its owner in 1782, as *Malice Doire*, a day labourer. "The neighbours," he says, "conducted me to the envied possessor of this relic, who exhibited it according to the intent of the royal investment. A youth of nineteen, the representative of his father's name, and presumptive heir to the treasure, lay drooping in an outer apartment in the last gasp of a consumption;" and yet here was one who only wanted patrimonial lands to have claimed a prouder descent than any whose ancestry figure in the Ragman roll. The

* Proceedings of Soc. Antiq. Scot., vol. ii., pp. 12, 128.

† Prehistoric Annals of Scotland, p. 464.

‡ *Vide* Archæol. Scot., ii., p. 75.

present representative of those to whom the Bruce entrusted the custody of the sacred relic, has acquired a farm in Western Canada, and—more from want of faith in the fidelity of future heirs, than from himself undervaluing the hereditary trust,—is not unwilling to part with the relic, if he could see it transferred to safe keeping. He has hitherto named £500 as the lowest sum he was willing to receive for it; and at one time submitted to the Earl of Elgin, while Governor General of Canada, a proposition to take in lieu of this, two thousand acres of Canadian land to be apportioned among his sons, on learning that His Excellency, who claims the honors of the Bruce, coveted the precious heirloom. Since then he has expressed his approval of a modified scheme by which I have endeavoured to secure the deposition of this national relic in the Museum of the Scottish Antiquaries at Edinburgh, where it would possess an interest and value altogether wanting to it while it lies, as it has done for some time, safe but totally unheeded, in the strong room of a Canadian Custom House. Under this proposed arrangement the Keepership of the Crozier is to remain nominally with the Dewars,—to avert, it may be, the evil consequences said to have followed on a former occasion, when the custody was transferred to other hands. My correspondent, the Rev. Æ. McDonell Dawson, remarks in the letter already referred to: "This family lost possession of the Crozier for a time, having disposed of it for a sum of money to an ancestor of my mother's family, who adhered to the ancient faith.* Soon after this transaction, however, ceasing to prosper, and attributing their change of circumstances to their indifference to a sacred object that had been solemnly entrusted to them, they persuaded the purchaser, or rather the person who inherited the Crozier from him, to part with it in his favour."

In reply to my inquiries for family traditions or documentary evidence relative to the Crozier of St. Fillan, Mr. Dewar thus writes: "I am sorry to say that I can give you but little information concerning the Quigrich. My father came to this country in the year 1818; and in coming up the Ottawa river, met with an old Scottish gentleman, of the name of McDonald, with whom he left several old papers that he had concerning the Quigrich, which papers were never returned, as Mr. McDonald's house was burned soon after, and

* Mr. Alexander Dewar, the present owner, is a Presbyterian, as his immediate ancestors were.

the papers lost." Mr. Dewar, however, retains in his possession a copy of the royal investment granted to Malice Doire, one of his ancestors, by James III. in 1467, in confirmation of more ancient royal deeds by Robert the Bruce; and registered by the Lords of Council and Session, at Edinburgh, in 1734. In this royal investment,—endorsed on the back of the old copy in Mr. Dewar's possession: "Charter of King James anent possessing the Relic of St. Phillan, in favor of Malice Deore, 1488,"*—it is set forth that "For as mekle as we have understand that oure servitoure Malice Doire and his forbearis has had an Relick of St. Filane, callit the Quegrich, in keeping of us and oure progenitors of maist nobill mynde, quham G^d assoleze, sen the tyme of King Robert the Bruys and of before, and made nane obedience nor answere to us persoun spir^ale nor temporale in ony thing concerning the said haly Relick uthirwayis y^n is qteind in the auld infeftment thereof made and [grantit be oure said progenitouris. We charge you therefore] and commandis that in tyme to come ye and ilk ane of you reddy answere intend and do obey to the said Malice Doire in the peciable brooking and joising of the said Relick, and x^o ye nain of you tak upon hand to compell nor distrese him to mak obedience nor answere to you nor till ony either bot alanerly to us and our successoures, according to the said infeftment and foundation of the said Relick. . . . And that ye mak him nane impediment, letting, nor distroubance in the passing with the said Relick throw the Countre, as he and his forebearis was a wont to do."†

The virtues ascribed to the Crozier of St. Fillan, in his native district, were of a most varied description. It was regarded as an effectual cure for fever, by administering, or sprinkling with water in which it had been dipped; and was no less infallible in cases of scrofula, or the King's evil, by being rubbed on the affected parts. It was serviceable also as a charm for the discovery and restoration of stolen cattle; and generally in all cases of disease of such. On this point Mr. Dewar replies to my queries: "It is quite true that the relic was looked on as a charm, but since it came into my possession

* On the endorsement the date is given in Arabic numerals, 1488; in the deed itself it is "MCCCCLXXXVII, and of oure regne ye XXVII zere—sic subscribitur Jacobus R."

† The whole document is printed in the Archæologia Scotica, vol. iii. p. 280; but the copy in Mr. Dewar's possession, though old enough, differs sufficiently to indicate its being another than that seen in 1792. The portion in brackets, which is a blank in the MS, has been supplied from the printed copy, otherwise I have followed Mr. Dewar's MS.

I have not been much troubled with it in that way, except for diseases of cattle. Two men, who had sick cattle, came to get water of it for them; but I never inquired whether it cured them or not." On another point, also, he adds: "The meaning of the word Quigrich I do not know; neither do I know whether it is a Gaelic word or not."

In the name *Quegrich*, by which the Crozier of St. Fillan is designated in the Charter of James III., I am inclined to suspect a descriptive memorial of its historical association with THE KING, as Robert the Bruce was, *par excellence*, long after the days of his Royal descendant James III. Possibly it compounds with *Righ*, an old form of *cuag*, and signifies the King's Crook; as it might well be designated after the miraculous interposition on the Bruce's behalf, recorded in the *Acta Sanctorum*. The proper generic name of such symbols of pastoral oversight and rule, has been made the subject of some difference of opinion. With the usual derivation of Crozier from F. *croix*, it has been assumed that this is properly the superior pastoral staff or cross. But while we have the Medieval Latin: *cumbutta* for the crozier, we have the corresponding *crocia* for the pastoral staff; and it is more probable that our crozier, or chief-pastor's crook, is derived directly from the A.S. *cryc* Du. *crook*, equally with the shepherd's crook; as in the description of the Archdeacon, in the FREERES TALE of Chaucer:—

> For smale tithes and smale offering,
> He made the pople pitously sing;
> For er the bishop lernt hem with his crook,
> They weren in the archedeknes book.

In celtic Scotland, the simple latin *baculus* was converted into *bachul easpuig*, the bishop's staff; *bachul mohr*, the big staff; and the corresponding *buchall* is used throughout the ancient Irish MSS., not only to denote the crozier of a bishop, abbot, or abbess, but also the penitential staff of a pilgrim; and it is much more likely that the pastoral staff of the Abbot and Apostle of Strathfillan resembled, in material as well as form, a primitive shepherd's crook, than that he bore about with him in his missionary wanderings among the wild Pagans of Loch Tay such a tempting relic as that which has so long helped to associate his name and fame with the scene of his early and self-denying labours. Again we find the crozier presented by St. Columba of Iona, to St. Kentigern, the first Bishop of Glasgow, de-

signated in Joceline's life of the latter, both by the term *baculus* and *cambo*, another form of the *cambutta*; while again at a later period it reappears in the accounts of the Scottish Lord Treasurer, in 1506, as *cabok*. The derivation, there can be little doubt, is from the Gaelic or Welsh *cam*, crooked, which enters into so many compounds, and from which, also, is no doubt derived the more homely *cammock*, or Scottish shinty, prohibited by Edward III. under its latinised form of *cambuca*, or *cambuta*.*

To St. Fillan's cabok a special name was given, though it probably represents the most usual form of the ornamental baculus or cambutta of the ninth and tenth centuries, and even of a later period. It is literally a beautiful and elaborately wrought shepherd's crook; and, whatever diversity of opinions may arise on other points, it cannot admit of a doubt that this fine example of early celtic art exhibits abundant evidence of belonging to an era long prior to that of the hero of Scottish independence. The accompanying lithographic plate—skilfully executed from a very careful drawing,—renders any elaborate description of its form or details unnecessary. The interlaced knot-work and other ornamentation is such as is already well known, especially on some of the beautiful silver and goldsmiths' work of early Irish art. The front is jewelled with a large oval crystal, set on a plate which appears to have been moveable, and probably hinged, though it is now somewhat roughly secured, so as no longer to admit of being opened. This may have been the lid by which the bone of the Saint was inserted in the favoured reliquary; and which, according to the legend preserved in the "Acta Sanctorum," suddenly appeared open as it stood on the altar in the Bruce's tent, and reproached its faithless guardian with his unpatriotic deceit. Above this, and forming the front of the crest or ridge, is a figure, or bust, of an ecclesiastic, most probably designed for the Saint himself, while the lower end of the ridge terminates in the form of a snake's head, common on bronze relics of a late period. On the flat shield-shaped point of the crook, is a rude but bold engraving of the crucifixion, with two stars in the field, one on each side below the arms of the cross. The whole is of silver gilt, wrought on a hollow core of copper, and measures nine and a quarter inches in height, and nearly seven and a half inches across, from the point of the crook. It will be seen that it differs considerably, both in form

* Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, B. II. c. iii. Goff, Cambuc, &c.

and details, from the sketch furnished to the Scottish Antiquaries in 1785, and copied in the Prehistoric Annals of Scotland, with an authentication of its general accuracy, on the authority of a correspondent at whose request the original had been inspected in its new Canadian reliquary. In its general form it most nearly resembles the head of the short episcopal cambutta borne by St. Luke, in the beautifully illuminated Gospels of MacDurnan, in the Library at Lambeth Palace, which have had the middle of the ninth century assigned as their date.* It is an exceedingly simple form, suggestive of a primitive age of art, and yet adorned with such rich and tasteful skill as to constitute—apart from its singularly interesting historical associations,—a valuable example of the workmanship of the early age to which it must be assigned, and of the primitive civilization which followed in the wake of that Christianity taught by St. Fillan and other Christian missionaries, to the first converts from among the pagan Celts of North Britain.

This ancient Scottish relic is still in the possession of Alexander Dewar, the lineal representative, in all probability, of the favoured follower of King Robert, to whom, according to no improbable tradition, it was confided on the field of Bannockburn, five hundred and forty-five years ago. Could the protection which the prejudices and superstition, no less than the national and family pride of earlier generations, secured for it as a sacred and chartered heirloom, be guaranteed to it under the charge of a Canadian yeoman, its fittest place would still be in the keeping of the Dewars, to whose custody it was entrusted, under such remarkable circumstances, and who have been, through poverty and exile, faithful to their trust. But removal from Strathfillan to the clearings of the New World has broken the charm. It only remains in the keeping of its present custodier because no one has hitherto been found able or willing to pay the price he demands for the precious relic; and it is earnestly to be desired that, ere it is too late, it should be secured within the safe keeping of one of our great national collections, before, as apprehended by its former describer in 1785, it "find a ready passage to the melting pot;" or, like the documents which accompanied it to Canada, it perish in some chance conflagration, such as yearly consume hundreds of the frail wooden houses of Canadian settlers.

* Archæol. Journal, [illegible] vii. p. 20.

The most fitting place of depository for such a national relic, I conceive to be the Museum of Scottish Antiquities, now permanently established in the Royal Institution at Edinburgh, under the curatorship of the Society of Antiquaries, as a National Collection. Now that King Robert's Crook has been transferred to Canada, the Scotchmen of the Province are responsible for its safety, and it would be an exceedingly graceful act of patriotism if the Scotchmen of Canada would combine to raise the requisite sum, and restore the Quigrich of St. Fillan, and of THE BRUCE, to its appropriate resting-place in the Scottish Capital.

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